

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as set forth below:

1-20 (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:

processing hardware comprising at least one processor;

an operating system executable on the processing hardware; ~~and~~

a storage management system executable on the processing hardware, the storage management system comprising one or more storage management components, wherein the storage management system is configured to provide one or more virtual storage devices for use by the operating system, and wherein a set of storage commands supported by the storage management system for the virtual storage devices includes: (i) a set of standard commands used by the operating system to communicate with storage devices, and (ii) one or more additional commands for communicating with the storage management components; and

an application executable on the processing hardware and with the operating system, wherein the application is a source of at least one of the one or more additional commands;

and wherein each of the operating system, the storage management system, and the application are executable on the processor during use.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the virtual storage devices

are virtual small computer systems interface (SCSI) devices.

24. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 23 wherein the additional commands comprise additional input/output control (IOCTL) commands.

25. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management components include a file system.

26. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management components include a volume manager.

27. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management components include a volume replicator.

28. (Original) The apparatus as recited in claim 21 wherein the storage management components include a hierarchical storage manager.

29. (Currently Amended) A computer accessible medium comprising instructions forming one or more storage management components, wherein the instructions, when executed, provide one or more virtual storage devices for use by an operating system, and wherein a set of storage commands supported for the virtual storage devices includes: (i) a set of standard commands used by the operating system to communicate with storage devices, and (ii) one or more additional commands for communicating with the storage management components, and wherein an application designed to execute with the operating system is a source of at least one of the one or more additional commands, and wherein the application, the operating system, and the one or more storage management components execute on the same processing hardware comprising at least one processor during use.

30. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the virtual storage devices are virtual small computer systems interface (SCSI) devices.

31. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 30 wherein the additional commands comprise additional input/output control (IOCTL) commands.

32. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a file system.

33. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a volume manager.

34. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a volume replicator.

35. (Original) The computer accessible medium as recited in claim 29 wherein the storage management components include a hierarchical storage manager.

36-43 (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A method ~~comprising~~ comprising:

providing one or more virtual storage devices for use by an operating system, wherein a set of storage commands supported for the virtual storage devices includes: (i) a set of standard commands used by the operating system to communicate with storage devices, and (ii) one or more additional commands for communicating with storage management components in a storage management system;

sourcing at least one of the one or more additional commands from an application that is designed to execute with the operating system; and

executing the operating system, the application, and a storage management system that performs the providing on a same one or more processors.

45. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the virtual storage devices are virtual small computer systems interface (SCSI) devices.

46. (Original) The method as recited in claim 45 wherein the additional commands comprise additional input/output control (IOCTL) commands.

47. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a file system.

48. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a volume manager.

49. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a volume replicator.

50. (Original) The method as recited in claim 44 wherein the storage management components include a hierarchical storage manager.